United Nations A/71/86–E/2016/13

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
10 May 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Item 60 of the preliminary list*
Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Economic and Social Council
2016 session
24 July 2015-27 July 2016
Agenda item 16
Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

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Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 2015/17, the Economic and Social Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session, through the Council, a report on the implementation of that resolution. The Assembly, in its resolution 70/225, also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its seventy-first session. The present report, which was prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, has been submitted in compliance with the resolutions of the Council and the Assembly.

The report covers persistent Israeli practices and policies, particularly those that are in violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and that affect the social and economic conditions of the people living under its military occupation. Israel employs discriminatory policies and practices, excessive use of force and mobility restrictions, including the blockade on Gaza, settlement expansion, property destruction and exploitation of natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Impunity is afforded to Israeli security and military personnel and settlers. The cumulative impact of these policies and practices not only violates the rights of the population, but also exacerbates their social and economic conditions.

* A/71/50.

16-07590 (E) 190516

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The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia would like to express its appreciation for the substantive contributions of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the League of Arab States (LAS), the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2015/17, and the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/225, expressed concerns over the practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan that were in violation of international humanitarian law. Those practices have ranged from causing death and injury to civilians, including children, women and peaceful demonstrators, all of whom must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law, to violence by illegal armed Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and their properties, to the continued detention of thousands of Palestinians, including children and women, under harsh conditions. The Council and Assembly also expressed their concern regarding the continued expansion by Israel of settlements, the construction of the wall inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the exploitation of Palestinian natural resources, the increased demolition of homes, the state of economic institutions, agricultural lands and infrastructure, the revocation of residency rights of Palestinians in and around occupied East Jerusalem and the ongoing Israeli military operations throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as policies of closure and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including what in effect amounts to a blockade on the Gaza Strip. In the above-mentioned resolutions, the Council and Assembly also highlighted the detrimental impact of Israeli practices.

II. The Occupied Palestinian Territory

2. In spite of the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1), as well as other assertions (see General Assembly resolution 70/88 and A/69/711-S/2015/1), Israel continues to challenge the established fact that international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, is applicable in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.[1] The recurrent violations by Israel of international human rights law and international humanitarian law have become entrenched through Israeli policies and practices, and the lack of accountability for the violations further deepens the Palestinians' sense of injustice (see A/70/392, paras. 14-15).

3. Israeli policies and practices undermine the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and, since 1967, their cumulative effects have had a debilitating effect on the Palestinians (see A/HRC/31/43, para. 6, A/70/351, para. 79 and A/70/392, para. 86).

4. Tensions and violence erupted in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in October 2015, in the context of prolonged occupation, settlement expansion and settler violence[2] and in the aftermath of clashes at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, with Palestinians perceiving Israel as trying to change the status quo at the holy sites. On 26 January 2016, in his remarks to the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, the Secretary-

[1] See resolution 70/88 and Alan Baker, "International humanitarian law, ICRC and Israel's status in the Territories", *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 94, No. 888 (Winter 2012).

[2] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "2016 Humanitarian needs overview". Available from http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/hno_december29_final.pdf.

General highlighted the growing frustration felt by Palestinians, linked to Israeli actions that were chipping away the viability of a Palestinian State and the ability of the Palestinian people to live in dignity; in a briefing to the Council on 22 October 2015, his deputy referred to the stifling and humiliating occupation that had lasted almost half a century.

Segregation and discrimination

5. The existence and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land lie at the heart of discriminatory Israeli policies and human rights violations, which include home demolitions and the resulting displacement, discriminatory allocation of water and provision of access to land, movement restrictions, and the discriminatory legal system (see A/HRC/31/73, para. 32).

6. The settlers' presence increases tension, and the Israeli security forces and army are deployed to defend the settlements. Consequently, the security of Israeli settlers outplays that of Palestinians, undermining the equal application of the law (see A/70/351, para. 80).

7. The dual justice system in the occupied territory appears to be pitted against the protected population (see A/70/392, para. 85). While Palestinians lack access to civil justice, it is rare for Israeli settlers to be held accountable for acts of violence they commit against Palestinians, and Israeli army and security forces are also seldom held accountable for the violations they commit against Palestinians (see A/70/82-E/2015/13, paras. 8, 9, 30 and 51).

8. The Israeli zoning and planning regime in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is restrictive and discriminatory and is incompatible with international law. The regime caters to the interests of Israeli settlements at the expense of the needs of the Palestinians. It makes it practically impossible for Palestinians living in Area C, which constitutes 62 per cent of the West Bank (see A/70/82-E/2015/13, para. 16), to obtain building permits (see A/HRC/31/43, para. 45). Palestinians in East Jerusalem suffer from the same difficulties. Even if they manage to find land on which to build, which is limited in the city, they often cannot afford the high prices of building permits (see A/70/392, para. 65).

9. Discrimination in planning and zoning is reflected in the land available for construction in Area C, where Israeli authorities have permitted Palestinian construction on what amounts to approximately 0.4 per cent of Area C, compared to 20 per cent of the same area with approved plans for illegal Israeli settlements.[3] Only 1.5 per cent of Palestinian permit applications are approved.[4] Similarly in East Jerusalem, Palestinian construction is only allowed on 13 per cent of the municipal area of the city that is already built up, while 35 per cent of city area has been expropriated for Israeli settlements.[5]

[3] See "'One UN' approach to spatial planning in 'Area C' of the occupied West Bank" (United Nations, September 2015).

[4] Press release, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (17 February 2016). Available from http://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/humanitarian-coordinator-calls-israel-halt-demolitions.

[5] See "2016 Humanitarian needs overview: Occupied Palestinian Territory" (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

10. As of May 2015, an estimated 13,000 Palestinian structures in Area C[6] and 20,000 homes in East Jerusalem[7] lacked Israeli permits and were under threat of pending demolition orders. Little legal protection is afforded to Palestinians facing demolition orders, creating a coercive environment that eventually drives communities off the land they had inhabited for generations (A/HRC/31/43, para. 46, and A/70/392, para. 39).

11. Since 1967, the Government of Israel has sought to secure a Jewish majority and attain full control over East Jerusalem, through the construction of Israeli settlements, outposts, bypass roads and the wall. Those measures have been coupled with a set of discriminatory policies targeting Palestinians, including freezing the registration of land ownership in Jerusalem and its environs.[8]

12. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 expressed grave concern about Israeli policies that aim to achieve a particular demographic balance in East Jerusalem. Those policies work to stifle the natural growth of the Palestinian population in the city, preventing Palestinians from moving there and pressuring Palestinians to leave. The policies violate the rights of Palestinians to freedom of movement, adequate housing, access to education and health services, respect for family life and freedom from discrimination (see A/70/392, para. 68). The Special Rapporteur was also troubled by the fact the Israeli Local Outline Plan — Jerusalem 2000 does not mention Palestinians or East Jerusalem, but instead refers to "Arab residents in the eastern part of the city" (see A/70/392, paras. 62 and 68).

13. The above-mentioned policies and restrictions, coupled with the construction of the wall in the West Bank, have exacerbated the socioeconomic situation of the Palestinians of East Jerusalem. More than 75 per cent of them live under the poverty line, compared to 30.8 per cent of the residents of Israel (2013).[7]

14. In addition to the severe lack of services for and neglect of Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem,[7] and discriminatory budget allocation (see A/70/406 and Corr.1, para. 37), Palestinian residents of Jerusalem must contend with Israeli residency policies. Under one Israeli law, residencies of Palestinians who fail to continuously prove their residency in the city are withdrawn. Another law denies the children and spouses of Palestinian permanent residents automatic residency status in the city. As a result, several thousand Palestinian children are without residency status (see A/70/392, para. 63).

15. Israeli policies in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, apparently have the common objective of forcible displacement and the fostering of a hostile environment that contributed to the expansion of settlements (see A/70/406 and Corr.1, para. 34).

Excessive use of force and arbitrary detention

16. The eruption of violence in October throughout the West Bank led to a sharp rise in casualties. Overall, during the reporting period, 212 Palestinians were killed

[6] Ibid.
[7] See Association for Civil Rights in Israel, "East Jerusalem 2015: facts and figures" (May 2015).
[8] United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), *Right to Develop: Planning Palestinian Communities in East Jerusalem* (East Jerusalem, 2015), p. 1.

by the Israeli army, security forces or settlers including 40 children. Another 16,333 were injured, including more than 2,600 children.[9]

17. Of the Palestinian casualties, 188 were killed and approximately 15,000 injured after October 2015, many of whom were killed while allegedly carrying out attacks against Israelis.[10]

18. During the reporting period, 29 Israelis were also killed, including 26 civilians, and 272 were injured, including 169 civilians.

19. In the West Bank, accountability is generally lacking in cases of excessive use of force by Israeli security forces (see A/70/392, paras. 76-85). Serious concerns exist over the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces in the context of attacks and alleged attacks by Palestinians and during clashes, and ongoing settler violence (see A/HRC/31/73, para. 5), including cases, some of which have been captured on video, strongly suggesting unlawful killings (see A/HRC/31/40, para. 10, and A/HRC/31/73, paras. 19 and 23) in some instances appearing to amount to extrajudicial killings and summary executions. One such example is the shooting of Abed al-Fatah al-Sharif on 24 March 2016, in Hebron, West Bank, by an Israeli soldier as he lay incapacitated following his alleged role in a knife attack.[11]

20. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern about reports of deaths attributed to a delay in the provision of medical assistance to wounded suspects, or owing to the intentional blocking of ambulances and first responders by Israeli security forces (see A/HRC/31/40, para. 16).

21. Israeli security forces have continued to use live ammunition in law enforcement operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly since September 2015, reportedly in an extensive and often unwarranted manner. This includes the use of firearms against demonstrators and persons attempting to evacuate the wounded (see A/HRC/31/40, paras. 18-25).

22. In his report to the Human Rights Council on 11 January 2016, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 recalled the well-documented violations related to the Israeli occupation policies and saw a critical need for the international community to increase its protection of the Palestinian population (see A/HRC/31/73, para. 67).

Detention and ill-treatment

23. According to Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, since 1967, up to 20 per cent of the Palestinian population had at some point been detained by Israeli authorities (see A/70/392, para. 73). By the end of January 2016,

[9] ESCWA calculations, based on information obtained from "Humanitarian bulletin" (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, January 2016) and "Protection of civilians" (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 22-28 March 2015).

[10] Ibid.

[11] Press releases, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: 16 November 2015, available from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16759&LangID=E; and 30 March 2016, available from http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=18544&LangID=E#sthash.L0WRsNrv.dpuf.

6,945 Palestinians were being held in Israeli prisons, including 568 administrative detainees.[12]

24. The number of Palestinian children in detention jumped from 193 in September 2015 to 415 in January 2016.[13] This sharp increase raises concerns about meeting international law requirements that children be arrested and detained only as a last resort.[14] In East Jerusalem, 860 Palestinian children were arrested, 136 of them between the ages of 7 and 11.[15]

25. A development of concern is the reinstatement of the administrative detention of children, which had not been in practice in East Jerusalem since 2000 and in the rest of the West Bank since 2011. Between October and December 2015, six children were placed in administrative detention by Israeli authorities.[15]

26. International humanitarian law[16] prohibits the transfer of detainees outside the occupied territory. However, the majority of Palestinian detainees, including children, are held in Israeli prisons inside Israel (A/70/392, para. 73). This constitutes a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention (A/HRC/31/40, para. 43).

27. The utilization of administrative detention by Israel is inconsistent with the exceptional nature of detention permitted under article 78 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. During the reporting period, a number of Palestinian administrative detainees resorted to hunger strikes to protest their detention without charges (see A/HRC/31/40, paras. 42 and 44).

28. On 30 July 2015 the Israeli Knesset passed a law that allows force-feeding detainees on hunger strike, in a move that does not comply with human rights standards and is tantamount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, even if intended for their benefit.[17] The Israeli Medical Association considers that forced feeding is equivalent to torture.[18]

29. According to B'tselem, ill-treatment, abuse and torture of Palestinian prisoners and detainees, particularly during interrogations, have continued with the backing of all State authorities.[19] B'tselem and Hamoked concluded in 2015 that cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of Palestinian detainees was inherent, institutionalized and implemented with full immunity.[20]

30. The United Nations and partners continued to document cases of ill-treatment of children by Israeli security forces during their arrest and detention in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.[15]

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[12] B'tselem, http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners (accessed 29 March 2016).

[13] Ibid.

[14] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "2016 Humanitarian needs overview". Available from http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/hno_december29_final.pdf.

[15] Information received from the United Nations Children's Fund.

[16] Articles 47 and 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

[17] Press release, World Health Organization (WHO) (8 August 2015). Available from http://www.emro.who.int/pse/palestine-news/un-joint-statement-on-new-israeli-law-on-force-feeding-of-detainees.html.

[18] Israeli Medical Association, "The physician's guide to treating the detainee/prisoner on a hunger strike" (June 2014).

[19] B'tselem, "Abuse and torture of detainees are immoral and illegal measures" (15 December 2015).

[20] B'tselem and Hamoked, *Backed by the System: Abuse and Torture at the Shikma Interrogation Facility* (December 2015).

31. Medical negligence and lack of adequate medical care in the treatment of Palestinians in Israeli detention centres continue to be reported (A/70/406, para. 56).

32. On 20 July 2015, Israel amended its Penal Code regarding throwing stones, stipulating that anyone throwing stones or any other object at moving vehicles could be sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment. This has raised concerns since most of those charged with stone-throwing are Palestinian children (A/70/392, para. 71), and as of October 2015 the conviction rate for Palestinians arrested by Israeli security forces stood at a worrisome 99 per cent (see A/70/406, para. 53).

33. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel flagged a series of legislative changes and guidelines indicating that the central — and perhaps even the sole — consideration the authorities take into account is the deterrence of minors, and not their rehabilitation and return to normative conduct, which is contrary to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.[21]

Population displacement, property destruction and land confiscation

34. In the Gaza Strip, over 76,000 people remain displaced as a consequence of the 2014 Israeli summer offensive.[22]

35. In the West Bank, the destruction of homes and livelihoods, forced evictions and relocation plans, settler violence, movement and access restrictions and, particularly in East Jerusalem, settler takeover of homes as well as laws regarding residency (see para. 14) have all contributed to the continued forced displacement of Palestinians.[2]

36. Home demolitions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem continue at an alarming rate, in violation of international humanitarian law, which prohibits the destruction of property in an occupied territory.[23]

37. During 2015, mostly citing the lack of building permits, Israeli authorities demolished 544 structures in the West Bank, including 79 in East Jerusalem, displacing 757 Palestinians.[24] In the first two months of 2016, more than 321 structures, including 88 homes, were demolished.[23] In addition to demolitions, Palestinians also face the threat of settlers taking over their homes (see A/70/392, para. 66). Among the structures destroyed in the West Bank, one third (108) had been provided as humanitarian assistance by aid organizations.[22]

38. In 2014, Israel resumed the practice of punitive home demolitions, whereby homes of the families of attackers or suspected attackers are demolished (see A/70/82-E/2015/13, para. 42). On 14 October 2015, the Government of Israel officially reinstated this policy, which includes sealing houses to render them uninhabitable.[25] Israeli authorities demolished or rendered uninhabitable 25 homes during 2015, and 4 during the first two months of 2016.[26]

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[21] Nisreen Alyan and Maytal Russo, "Arrested childhood: the ramifications of Israel's new strict policy toward minors suspected of involvement in stone throwing, security offenses, and disturbances" (Association for Civil Rights in Israel, February 2016).

[22] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian bulletin" (February 2016).

[23] Press Release, Humanitarian Coordinator calls on Israel to halt demolitions in the occupied West Bank immediately and to respect international law, 17 February 2016.

[24] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian bulletin" (January 2016).

[25] Information received from UNRWA.

[26] See B'tselem, http://www.btselem.org/punitive_demolitions/statistics (accessed 29 March 2016).

39. Proposals by the Israeli Government to revoke the residency rights of family members of suspected attackers (see A/HRC/31/40, para. 31) or to allow their deportation to Gaza are other causes for concern.[27] Such practices constitute a form of illegal collective punishment and violate the right of Palestinians to adequate housing, despite prohibitions of forced evictions.[28]

40. In 2015, the Government of Israel took significant procedural and legal steps towards relocating some 50 Palestinian Bedouin communities in Area C. The relocation may amount to individual and mass forcible transfers, which are a breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention (see A/HRC/31/43, para. 49). Such forcible transfers, which are apparently linked to Israeli settlement expansion (see A/70/351, para. 20), threaten the culture, social fabric and livelihoods of Bedouin communities. This was the case with approximately 150 Bedouin families that were relocated in the 1990s to make way for settlement expansion.[29]

41. Israel continues to confiscate and expropriate Palestinian land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Those measures also appear to be linked to the expansion of illegal settlements, the construction of the wall in the West Bank and the establishment of bypass roads mainly for the sole use of settlers.[30]

42. According to the Applied Research Institute — Jerusalem, in 2015 Israel confiscated 3,670.6 dunums[31] of land in the West Bank and 615.2 dunums in East Jerusalem.[30] In the first three months of 2016, Israel also confiscated a total of 3,842 dunums in the West Bank.[32] This is in addition to more than 1,010,000 dunums, which represents more than 20 per cent of the West Bank area, including East Jerusalem, that have been confiscated since 1967.[33]

43. On 15 April 2015, the Supreme Court of Israel reaffirmed the application of the Absentees' Property Law, which allows the continued confiscation of property and assets in East Jerusalem whose owners reside in other parts of the West Bank or in Gaza (see A/70/406, para. 48).

44. The Government of Israel continues to support and promote settler takeovers of land, through methods including building housing units, allocating agricultural lands for settlements, declaring sites as archaeological or national parks, and developing infrastructure on Palestinian land (see A/HRC/31/43, para. 13).

Settlements and settler violence

45. Israeli settlements and their expansion lie at the root of a broad spectrum of human rights violations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (see

[27] Lahav Harkov, *Jerusalem Post*, "Broad support in Knesset for bill to deport terrorists' families to Gaza" (9 March 2016). Available from http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Broad-support-for-bill-to-deport-terrorists-families-to-Gaza-447367.

[28] A/HRC/31/40, paras. 29 and 31; see also article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

[29] Press release, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (19 January 2016), available from https://www.ochaopt.org/documents/hc_unrwa_joint_statement_abu_nuwar_final.pdf; and information received from UNRWA.

[30] Information received from UNEP.

[31] 1 dunum = 1,000 square metres.

[32] Peace Now, "The Government declares 2,342 dunums south of Jericho as State Land" (15 March 2016). Available from http://peacenow.org.il/eng/JerichoDeclaration100316.

[33] Ibid.

A/HRC/31/43, para. 5). Israeli settlement policies also violate international humanitarian law and a number of Security Council resolutions (see A/70/351, paras. 83 and 84). The policies of the Government of Israel towards the settlements, including retroactive legalization of unauthorized outposts (25 since 2011),[34] amount to the unlawful transfer of its own population into occupied territory (see A/70/351, para. 83).

46. The settlements have led to the fragmentation of the West Bank, restricted Palestinian access to natural resources in the occupied territory and to the subsequent impediment to the Palestinian people's right to self-determination (see A/HRC/31/43, paras. 5 and 6).

47. By the end of 2014, there were approximately 570,700 Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (370,700 in the West Bank and 200,000 in East Jerusalem),[35] living in more than 150 settlements[36] and approximately 100 outposts.[37] The United Nations Environment Programme reported that the settler population in the West Bank may have reached 750,000.[30]

Settler violence

48. Palestinians continue to suffer from settler violence, while settlers have been perceived as enjoying significant impunity for the attacks they perpetrate against Palestinians and their properties, notwithstanding a number of settler arrests in this context.[38]

49. In 2015, 898 Israeli settler attacks on Palestinians and their property, fields and religious sites were reported,[30] and in the first three months of 2016, 30 incidents of settler attacks resulted in injuries to Palestinians or damage to property.[39]

50. On 31 July 2015, settlers burned the Dawabsha family home in Duma, killing a toddler and his parents and badly injuring his four-year-old brother (see A/70/392, para. 47). In January 2016, an Israeli settler and a minor were indicted for this murder. On 20 March 2016, the home of Ibrahim Dawabsheh, who was the sole witness to the first arson attack, was also the target of an arson attack.[25]

Mobility restrictions and closure policies

51. Israel continues to impose disproportionate and discriminatory mobility restrictions on the Palestinian people, invoking security considerations, inconsistent with its obligations to ensure the right of Palestinians to freedom of movement and to public life (see A/HRC/31/40, para. 35).

[34] The Rights Forum and Yesh Din, "Under the radar" (March 2015).
[35] Peace Now, "Settlement development data". Available from http://peacenow.org.il/eng/sites/default/files/Settlement_Development%20Data_241215.xls (accessed 10 March 2016).
[36] Press release, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (17 September 2015). Available from http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_IsrSettlments2014E.pdf.
[37] Yesh Din, "From occupation to annexation: the silent adoption of the Levy report on retroactive authorization of illegal construction in the West Bank", position paper (Tel Aviv, February 2016).
[38] Information received from the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and A/70/351, paras. 22 and 23.
[39] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Protection of civilians" (29 March-4 April 2016). Available from http://www.ochaopt.org/poc29march-4april-2016.aspx.

Gaza blockade, including access-restricted areas)

52. The ongoing Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip amounts to collective punishment and is unlawful. Since its inception in 2007, the policy has deprived Palestinians of their economic, social and cultural rights (see A/HRC/31/40, para. 36), including the rights to education, health, work, housing and freedom of movement (see A/70/392, para. 21).

53. The infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has been devastated as a result of the blockade and three major military offensives in six years. Compounded with a chronic power deficit, the status of the infrastructure exacerbates the already vulnerable living conditions in Gaza.[2]

54. In 2015, the relative improvement in the entry of certain materials through the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism was a positive development. However, those remained insufficient to respond to the overwhelming needs of the people of Gaza (see A/HRC/31/40, para. 36), who continue to suffer and have become even more reliant on aid.[25] In addition, Israel continues to impose restrictions on the entry of materials that it identifies as having a dual use, through the non-transparent manner in which items are added and the broad nature of their description.[40]

55. Those restrictions, coupled with the lack of donor funding, constitute key factors[41] that hamper the reconstruction of the 18,000 homes destroyed during the 2014 summer offensive and the rehabilitation of infrastructure. The ban on the import of 23 items needed for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects also obstructs the delivery of services to the population.[2]

56. Prior to the 2014 Israeli summer offensive, the blockade had caused a shortage of over 75,000 housing units, which resulted in overcrowding, an increase in rental prices, inadequate accommodation and associated health and protection concerns.[2]

57. UNRWA reported that the lengthy period of time and complicated procedures required to import some of the dual use items had led to considerable delays and additional costs for construction projects.[25]

58. The closure of the Rafah crossing by Egypt since October 2014 has exacerbated the humanitarian situation (see A/HRC/31/40, para. 36).

59. The Israeli ban on exports from Gaza was relatively eased in 2015. However, the volume of exports amounts to only 10 per cent of their volume in the months preceding the blockade.[2]

60. As part of the blockade, Israel restricts access to land and maritime areas. The 300 to 1,000 metre-wide buffer zone along the border of the Gaza Strip has effectively prohibited farmers from using their agricultural land.[42] Israel has also limited the fishing zone for Palestinians to three to six nautical miles, compared

[40] Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, "Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee" (30 September 2015).

[41] Information received from Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

[42] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, "The besieged Palestinian agricultural sector (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2015/1). Available from http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/gdsapp2015d1_en.pdf.

with 20 nautical miles allowed under the Oslo Accords.[43] On 3 April 2015, Israel expanded the Palestinian fishing zone off the southern portion of the Gaza coast from six to nine nautical miles.[44]

Mobility restrictions in the West Bank

61. A complex and multilayered system of administrative, bureaucratic and physical constraints impedes the movement of Palestinians within the West Bank, and is mainly linked to the settlements. The constraints are particularly severe for Palestinians who live in close proximity to Israeli settlements (A/HRC/31/44, paras. 12 and 22-23).

62. Since October 2015, Israel has further tightened mobility restrictions on Palestinians. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that by the end of December 2015, 91 new physical obstacles, including checkpoints, roadblocks and earth mounds, had been deployed, adding to the hundreds of such existing obstacles that were already deployed across the West Bank.[24]

63. The wall in the West Bank is the primary obstacle to the movement of Palestinians.[45] Israel continues its construction, even after the International Court of Justice ruled that all parts of the wall that were built inside the West Bank, rather than along the 1949 armistice line (the Green Line), were illegal (see A/ES-10/273 and Corr. 1). Of the current 712-kilometre planned route, 85 per cent lies within the West Bank. Consequently, the wall would de facto annex 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, along with entire communities comprising approximately 11,000 Palestinians (see A/70/82-E/2015/13, paras. 52-54).

64. Access of Palestinian farmers to their land and water resources that lie in the "seam zone"[46] is restricted to specific gates and is subject to obtaining special permits.[47] East Jerusalem is largely cut off from the other parts of the West Bank. Permits to enter East Jerusalem, which are required for Palestinians residing in other parts of the West Bank, are very difficult to obtain.[48]

65. According to UNRWA reports, Israeli restrictions impede access to Palestine refugee communities in the West Bank. Between March and December 2015, a total of 118 UNRWA access-related incidents were reported, resulting in a loss of an estimated 63 individual workdays or 472 work-hours, which negatively affected the delivery of education and health services as well as relief operations.[25]

Exploitation, endangerment and depletion of Palestinian natural resources

66. In Gaza, the repercussions of the 2014 Israeli military offensive are still evident and are compounded by the blockade. More than 120,000 people are still

[43] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "The Gaza Strip: the humanitarian impact of the blockade", July 2015.

[44] Press release by the Secretary-General (SG/SM/17682-SC/12328).

[45] Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, "Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee" (30 September 2015).

[46] The area that lies between the wall and the Green Line, declared by Israeli authorities as a closed area.

[47] Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, "Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee" (30 September 2015).

[48] Information received from ILO.

disconnected from public water networks, and 23 per cent of Gaza is not connected to the sewage network.[30]

67. Damage to the electricity gridlines and fuel and electricity shortages have resulted in a chronic electricity and fuel deficit affecting Gaza over the past nine years. The deficit has disrupted the delivery of basic water, sanitation and hygiene services, including more than 280 water and wastewater facilities in Gaza.[15]

68. As a result, there has been widespread sewage infiltration into the coastal aquifer. Owing to the deteriorated state of the infrastructure, up to 95 million litres of untreated or partially treated sewage are released into the Mediterranean every day or discharged into the environment.[2]

69. As of January 2016, Israel continued to designate over 70 per cent of the materials needed for water, sanitation and hygiene projects as dual use items, placing at least 30 water and wastewater projects in Gaza at risk of being suspended or cancelled.[49]

70. The daily average water consumption in Gaza is 79 litres per capita per day, well below the rate of 100 litres per capita per day recommended by the World Health Organization. However, Gaza's coastal aquifer is contaminated, and 96 per cent of the water in the Gaza Strip is unsuitable for human consumption. Households must thus purchase drinking water from private companies at 10 times the price of public water.[50]

71. In the West Bank, Israel allocates water discriminatorily and prevents Palestinians from developing water infrastructure. The resulting average domestic consumption rate among Palestinians is approximately 40 litres per capita per day and drops to 20 litres per capita per day in several communities in Area C,[51] compared with 183 litres per capita per day for Israeli settlers.[30] Of the Palestinian communities in Area C, 70 per cent are not connected to a water network.[2]

72. Palestinians have to spend an average of 8 per cent of their monthly expenditure on purchasing water, compared to the world average of 3.5 per cent, and 0.9 per cent for Israelis living in illegal settlements. Families who have to rely on expensive tankered water spend as much as half of their monthly expenditure.[15] This has a particularly crippling impact on Palestinian farmers.[52]

73. In the West Bank, Israeli authorities continue to confiscate and demolish Palestinian water infrastructure. During 2015, 24 water supply units, 12 wells, two artesian wells, three pools, one water grid and six water tanks and trucks were demolished.[30]

74. In East Jerusalem, only 64 per cent of Palestinian households are officially connected to the water infrastructure.[7]

75. Israeli restrictions prevent Palestinians from cultivating almost half a million dunums of land suitable for agriculture in Area C.[2]

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[49] Emergency, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Group (EWASH), "Thirsting for justice: 2015 in review" (January 2016).

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Human Rights Watch, "Occupation Inc.: how settlement businesses contribute to Israel's violations of Palestinian rights" (January 2016). Available from https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/01/19/occupation-inc/how-settlement-businesses-contribute-israels-violations-palestinian.

76. The Jordan Valley is among the most fertile areas in the West Bank and comprises 30 per cent thereof. Israel continues to expand its settlements there and to allocate agricultural lands to the 9,500 Israeli settlers while preventing 60,000 to 80,000 Palestinians from cultivating or herding on around 87 per cent of the land.[52]

77. In 2015, the Israeli army destroyed 8,242 dunums of agricultural land by torching, spraying chemicals or dumping waste.[30] In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli army also damaged 420 acres of agricultural land by aerial herbicide in December 2015.[53]

78. Around 1,000 Israeli factories operate in 16 to 20 Israeli industrial zones in the West Bank, which reportedly have become a pollution haven.[54] For example, the Ariel settlement and its associated industries dump chemical waste through its sewer system, contaminating nearby Palestinian agricultural land.[55] The Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem reports that sewage from Israeli settlements was pumped into 131 dunums of Palestinian land in 2015.[30]

79. The 2014 Israeli offensive on Gaza has had a number of delayed environmental repercussions. Some areas may have sustained extensive soil damage, including the removal and destruction of topsoil, rendering much of the land infertile or significantly reducing the quantity and quality of yields. Air quality has also deteriorated in some areas, including particulate matter and lead air pollution significantly above acceptable WHO levels.[30]

80. According to UNEP, the 2014 offensive may also have resulted in loss of wildlife and native plants.[30]

81. As of 2015, Israeli stone quarries and crushers were expanding beyond the 3,522 dunums of Palestinian private lands they occupied in the West Bank.[30]

82. Israel continues to prevent Palestinians from developing their natural gas resources off the coast of Gaza.[30]

Socioeconomic conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

83. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unique and directly tied to the impact of almost 50 years of occupation; one in two Palestinians (2.3 million people) will need some form of humanitarian assistance in 2016.[2]

Economic conditions

84. The Palestinian economy exists under prolonged occupation. Owing to long-standing Israeli restrictions on movement, access and trade, private sector activity has been severely constrained in the West Bank. Conditions are worse in Gaza, assailed by recurrent conflict and with an economy devastated by nine years of blockade that have significantly eroded the productive base and competitiveness of the private sector. The aid-driven growth of the Palestinian economy between 2007 and 2011 started to slow down in 2012, primarily as a result of a sharp drop in donor budget support. Although aid levels rose again in 2013, growth rates continued to decline, providing further evidence that the present growth model has

[53] Information received from UNEP; see also http://972mag.com/idf-admits-spraying-herbicides-inside-the-gaza-strip/115290/.

[54] Human Rights Watch, "Occupation Inc.: how settlement businesses contribute to Israel's violations of Palestinian rights" (January 2016).

[55] Ibid.; and information received from UNEP.

exhausted its potential.[56] The Palestinian economy cannot be put on a development path that is sustainable under the current paradigm and under conditions of recurrent major military operations, deliberate destruction of infrastructure and services, confiscation of land, expansion of illegal settlements and prolonged restrictions on movement and trade, including the Gaza blockade.

85. The Palestinian economy contracted by 0.2 per cent in 2014 and by 2.1 per cent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2015 before showing signs of recovery. Overall real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 0.9 per cent year-on-year in the second quarter of 2015 and 9.6 per cent in the third quarter, owing to a rebound from a low base in Gaza in the third quarter of 2015 and a steady growth rate in West Bank.[57]

86. The unemployment rate stood at 25.8 per cent in the third quarter of 2015 (38 per cent in Gaza and 18.7 per cent in the West Bank). Significantly, the rates were high among vulnerable groups: 41.7 per cent among youth aged 20 to 24 years; 29.8 per cent among Palestinians with 13 or more years of schooling; 39.9 per cent and 19.3 per cent, respectively, among refugees in Gaza and the West Bank; and 60.5 per cent and 30.5 per cent, respectively, among women in Gaza and the West Bank.[58]

87. Severe import/export restrictions have been a major disincentive to private sector investment, forcing the economy to restructure inwards towards non-tradable goods and the service sector. Public administration and services account for the largest share of Gaza's GDP (32.6 per cent and 24.1 per cent, respectively).[59] The easing of export restrictions in 2015 had little tangible impact on the local economy.[60]

88. Slow economic recovery is underway in Gaza. Real GDP increased from a low base by 33.3 per cent in the third quarter of 2015 when compared to the same quarter of 2014, after six quarters of yearly decline. The upturn was led mainly by a limited rebound in the construction sector, along with strong performance in the wholesale and retail trade sector in the aftermath of the 2014 Israeli offensive.

89. On the expenditure side, the recovery is mostly explained by positive trends in investment and private consumption. In spite of that, the consequences of the 2014 offensive linger: the level of real GDP per capita in Gaza in the first three quarters of 2015 (equal to less than half of the GDP per capita in the West Bank) was below its level for the same period in 2010, implying an important loss in the development indicators.[61]

90. After a slowdown in 2014-2015 caused by a four-month suspension in clearance revenue transfers by Israel, West Bank growth returned to an upward trend

[56] World Bank, "Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee", 30 September 2015 (99646 V2).

[57] All figures are based on official quarterly national accounts published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (accessed 9 March 2016). Note that figures for 2015 are preliminary.

[58] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Labour force survey (October-December 2014) Round (Q4/2015).

[59] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Estimates of National Accounts" (Q3 2015).

[60] Information received from UNRWA; and Palestine Trade Center (PalTrade). See also Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Gaza Crossings database. Available from http://www.ochaopt.org/.

[61] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Estimates of National Accounts" (Q3 2015).

and registered growth of 3.2 per cent and 4.0 per cent in the second and third quarters of 2015 compared to the same quarters of the previous year. This was mostly attributed to private consumption and investment, in spite of a deceleration in consumption by the public sector. In terms of economic sectors, the recovery is mostly attributed to trade and private services, while public services, manufacturing and the primary sector reported declines during the first quarter of 2015 with respect to the same period of 2014.

91. Palestinians working in illegal settlements in the West Bank suffer from abuse, exploitation and work environments that pose risks to their health and safety. They do not receive the Israeli minimum wage, and child labour continues to be a serious problem, particularly in the Jordan Valley.[62]

Food security

92. A total of 1.6 million Palestinians (28 per cent of households) suffer from severe food insecurity, while another 37 per cent of the population suffers from marginal or moderate food insecurity.[22] Approximately half of the Palestinian population suffers from more than one micronutrient deficiency. Alarmingly, 72 per cent of female adolescents in Gaza suffer from a vitamin D deficiency, and 64 per cent suffer from a deficiency of vitamin A.[2]

93. In 2014, an estimated 47 per cent of households in Gaza were food insecure. A food security crisis has been averted only as a result of the large-scale provision of humanitarian assistance.[25] The situation has deteriorated in Gaza in 2015. According to a household survey on living conditions conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 51.5 per cent of households reported that they ate less food than needed because of unavailability, 40.2 per cent reported that they had fewer meals owing to insufficient food, and 64.5 per cent of households had to purchase food products on credit.[63]

94. In the West Bank, 16 per cent of households are considered moderately or severely food insecure, with low purchasing power and limited resilience.[2] The rate is particularly high in West Bank refugee camps, at 29 per cent.[25]

Public health

95. Almost half a century of Israeli occupation and practices, entailing humiliation and loss of control over daily life activities, has had a detrimental impact on the mental health and well-being of the Palestinian population (see A/70/392, para. 60).

96. In Gaza, the repercussions of the 2014 conflict continue to unfold, with around 225,000 children requiring psychosocial support and child protection services.[2]

97. According to a 2015 household survey,[64] approximately one in three respondents reported a negative mental health status and more than a quarter of

[62] International Labour Office, *The Situation of Workers in the Occupied Arab Territories*, International Labour Conference, 104th Session, 2015 (ILC.104/DG/APP).

[63] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia calculations based on Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics data.

[64] Press release, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (October 2015). Available from http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_GazaWar2014E.pdf.

respondents reported moderate to high levels of distress.[65] Of the persons surveyed, 56 per cent reported that they felt deprived, with the majority citing the Israeli occupation, including the blockade, as the main cause of their deprivation. A total of 84 per cent considered suffering to be a part of their lives. In addition, 12 per cent of the respondents aged 30 years and over reported having from one to three chronic diseases (hypertension, diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular disease) diagnosed by a doctor.[66]

98. The closures and aforementioned conflict have led to the severe deterioration of the health sector in Gaza in terms of availability and quality of services. The situation has further deteriorated as a result of the closure of the Rafah crossing since July 2013.[2]

99. The infant mortality rate in Gaza has risen for the first time in five decades, as hospitals continue to lack adequate physical infrastructure, drugs and supplies.[67]

100. Overcrowded substandard houses have heightened the public health risks associated with improper disposal of solid waste at dumping sites and standing wastewater near refugee camps, where the average population density is nearly 40,000 persons per square kilometre.[25]

101. In the West Bank, Israeli restrictions on movement and construction impede Palestinian access to health-care services (see A/70/392, para. 56), including medical referral services.[15] The permit regime, checkpoints and the wall impede access to the six East Jerusalem hospitals that provide specialized health services unavailable elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Among the most affected are Palestinians residing in Area C, areas affected by the wall and East Jerusalem peripheries. The access of those communities to basic health services is also restricted by the actions of Israeli security forces and settler violence.[2]

102. In 2015, 10 incidents of interference with health care were documented in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Incidents include the forced closure of clinics, undercover search and arrest operations and Israeli security forces entering hospitals to obtain files and interrogate medical staff. In addition, the Palestine Red Crescent Society reported that more than 131 paramedics and volunteers were wounded and 76 ambulances were damaged while undertaking their duties in the West Bank; access by medical teams to sick and wounded persons was denied or delayed by Israeli security forces on 70 different occasions.[15]

Education

103. UNRWA reports that 86 per cent of the schools operated in double shifts in 2015. Refugee children attending those schools thus had fewer opportunities to engage in recreational and creative pursuits than students who attended single shift schools.[25]

104. In the West Bank, the education sector suffers from the discriminatory zoning and planning regime, settler violence and measures by the Israeli army, as well as an

[65] Using the 12-item General Health Questionnaire which is an international screening tool for the assessment of general mental health status and well-being.

[66] ESCWA and Birzeit University, "A people in danger: effects on health of the 2014 Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip" (May 2016).

[67] Information received from UNRWA; see http://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/increasing-neonatal-mortality-among-palestine-refugees-gaza-strip.

insufficient number of schools. In Area C, 50,000 students incur risks on their way to school. More than 1,700 children in 37 localities have to walk 5 kilometres or more to reach their schools. Around 2,500 children are forced to cross Israeli military checkpoints on a daily basis to reach school. A total of 10,000 children attend makeshift schools, in such structures as tents, caravans and tin shacks, that provide no protection against heat or cold.[68]

105. In 2015, attacks on schools and protected personnel in the West Bank and a pervasive environment of violence, harassment and intimidation continued to have an impact upon children's access to education. Schools are subjected to shootings during law enforcement operations and clashes. Students and teachers are subjected to attacks and threats of violence by Israeli security forces and settlers. Closure of schools or arrest and detention of staff and students interfere with education.[15]

106. In Gaza, of the 262 schools and 274 kindergartens damaged or destroyed during the 2014 hostilities, 96 per cent of non-United Nations schools, all United Nations schools and 65 per cent of kindergartens have been repaired or rebuilt through the assistance of humanitarian organizations and donors.[15]

107. Israeli law stipulates that children who are residents of East Jerusalem are entitled to free education. However, Palestinian-run schools are overcrowded and have substandard facilities. Several of them, along with such facilities as playgrounds, are threatened with demolition. Restrictions on construction impede the construction of new schools (see A/70/392, para. 67). Checkpoints and the wall hinder the access of Palestinian students and teachers to educational facilities in East Jerusalem.[2] Those conditions result in high dropout rates that reach 33 per cent in grade 12.[69]

III. The occupied Syrian Golan

108. Since 1967, Israel has continued to occupy the Syrian Golan despite numerous resolutions adopted by various United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, which in its resolution 497 (1981) of 17 December 1981 decided that the decision by Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights was null and void, and demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, should rescind forthwith its decision.

109. By 2015, 24,200 Syrian citizens lived in five villages, compared with 19,400 Israelis in 32 settlements.[62] In October 2015, it was reported that Israel intended to add an additional 100,000 settlers to the occupied Golan over the next five years (see A/HRC/31/43, para. 64).

110. The Government of Israel has promoted settlements in the Golan by providing financial incentives (see A/HRC/31/43, para. 6). It has been reported that financial incentives of up to $12,000 were offered to Israeli families that settled in Golan settlements for a minimum of five years (see A/70/406, para. 12).

[68] Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_IntChildDy2015E.pdf.

[69] See Association for Civil Rights in Israel, http://www.acri.org.il/en/2016/02/01/5-year-grace-period-for-education-in-east-jerusalem-has-ended/.

111. About 20 per cent of the structures in the Syrian villages were built within the villages municipal boundaries without building permits on Israeli-declared "State land". Annual fines are imposed by the Israeli authorities on such construction. Recent considerable increases in the amount of the fines, from approximately $2,594 to as much as approximately $51,882, seriously threaten the livelihoods of many Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan.[62]

112. While there had been no recent reported cases of major demolition of property in the occupied Syrian Golan, civil society representatives indicated that demolition orders for Syrian properties issued in the past were still in place (see A/70/406, para. 12).

113. There are also reports that additional Israeli efforts to populate the occupied Syrian Golan involve the establishment of 750 new farms and the transfer of 150 families per year. Ninety Israeli families had already been transferred to settle on those farms in 2015. It was also reported that as part of the farms project, Israel had illegally diverted water to irrigate the farms, thereby depleting water resources and depriving Syrians of their use (see A/70/406, para. 12).

114. Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan suffer from discriminatory policies, particularly related to land and water allocation. According to the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic, Israel has restricted Syrian residents' access to only 45,000 acres for farming in the occupied Syrian Golan, compared with 350,000 acres for Israeli settlers. Furthermore, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reported that Israeli authorities have prohibited Syrian farmers from shepherding and restricted their access to land for farming (see A/HRC/31/41, para. 12).

115. Over the years, expanding settlements and their activity have reduced Syrian farmers' access to water, while purchasing water has become more expensive. Discriminatory policies are also applicable for prices and fees. A Syrian has to pay one dollar per cubic metre of water, while a settler pays 30 cents for the same quantity. In addition, settlers are granted subsidized access to flood water, whereas Syrian farmers have been prevented from building new water reservoirs for nearly 30 years. Syrian farmers are allocated 200 cubic metres per dunum of land, which constitutes only a third of their farming needs. This is compared with 800 cubic metres per dunum allocated to settlers. Syrian farmers can thus produce 2.5 tons of apples per dunum while settlers produce an average of 6 to 8 tonnes.[62]

116. Israeli and foreign-owned companies, such as Genie Energy and Afek, have continued to explore and exploit natural resources, including water, gas and oil resources, after receiving licences from the Israeli authorities.[70]

117. The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic reports that Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan continued to be subjected to house arrest, arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment, unlawful detention and denial of family visits in Israeli prisons (see A/HRC/31/41, para. 9).

[70] See Afek — Israel Oil and Gas, http://afekoil.co.il/en/and A/HRC/31/41, para. 9.

IV. Conclusion

118. The inadmissibility of acquiring land by force is one of the main principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. This principle was reasserted in numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions that address the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories. Israel, nevertheless, continues, undeterred, to implement practices and policies that violate this principle, including the illegal annexation of East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan, and the de facto annexation of West Bank lands by means of the wall and settlements.

119. Another principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations is non-discrimination. The present report and other United Nations reports clearly point to the discriminatory nature of many Israeli policies and practices.

120. Israeli practices and policies in the territories it occupies involve violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Some of those practices may even amount to forcible displacement of the protected population, which would constitute a grave violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

121. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories has entered its fiftieth year. Policies by the occupying Power highlighted in this report seem to be geared towards consolidating control over those territories and can be viewed as part of a three-tiered strategy: population displacement, land grab and suppression of any form of resistance thereto. The impact of the policies on the Palestinian people, society and economy is multilayered and has accumulated over decades of occupation to reach unimaginable levels.

122. The Israeli occupation and its practices have obstructed Palestinian social and economic development and at times reversed it, undermining the right of the Palestinian people to development and self-determination and the prospects of peace. In a statement to the Security Council on 26 January 2016, the Secretary-General asserted that it is human nature to react to occupation, which often serves as a potent incubator of hate and extremism.

123. The impunity Israel has enjoyed so far has only rendered the attainment of peace more difficult. International law in all its elements must be respected and enforced without exception, to ensure a just and lasting peace. It is the duty of the international community to work towards the attainment of such a peace.